SOUTHEAST HIGH SPEED RAIL CORRIDOR

In 1992, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) designated five high speed corridors nationwide - including the Southeast Corridor from Washington, D.C. to Richmond, Raleigh and Charlotte. The corridor was later extended from Charlotte to Greenville, Spartanburg, Atlanta and Macon, and from Raleigh to Columbia, Savannah and Jacksonville.

Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia have joined together to form a four-state coalition to plan, develop and implement the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor to help address the increasing highway and airport congestion and preserve the quality of life for which the area is known. Improving passenger rail service is an important step in developing a more efficient, environmentally sound and comprehensive transportation system for this growing region.

Project History
1992 - The USDOT designates five high speed rail corridors nationwide -including one in the southeast.

1997 - A USDOT report on high speed rail identifies the Southeast Corridor as the most economically viable proposed high speed rail corridor in the country.

1998 - The USDOT extends the SEHSR to South Carolina, Florida and Georgia.

1999 - The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation begins environmental studies on the Washington, DC to Charlotte portion of the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor.

2000 - The NCDOT conducts public workshops as part of the environmental study process. The study examines the need for the project, evaluates major route alternatives and focus on regional effects on the natural and human environments.

2001 - North Carolina and Virginia, along with the Federal Highway and Railroad Administrations, have completed the Draft Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (initial environmental study that evaluates potential impacts along nine possible routes). Once the final environmental study is completed, and the routing is more defined, specific environmental studies can be completed and the departments can acquire the permits needed for construction. To minimize impacts to the environment, and reduce construction costs, the states plan to use primarily existing tracks and rail corridors. Modern, high speed trains also will be used in the corridor to reduce travel time. In the meantime, other projects will reduce travel time within the next few years.

2010 - The Washington-Charlotte portion of the SEHSR corridor could be completed. Implementation of the remainder of the SEHSR into South Carolina, Georgia and Florida will follow by several years.